

Docket No.: 04-02 US

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1.-43. (canceled)

Please add the following new claims:

44. (new) An apparatus for actuating movement of a sample carrier during in vitro testing, the apparatus comprising:

means for supporting a sample carrier in a container; and

a drivable component attached to the sample carrier supporting means, the drivable component including means for actuating the drivable component and the sample carrier supporting means to move together in the container, the actuating means responsive to non-contacting coupling with a driving source disposed entirely outside the container.

45. (new) The apparatus of claim 44, wherein the actuating means includes a magnet for magnetic coupling with the driving source.

46. (new) The apparatus of claim 44, wherein the sample carrier supporting means includes a body, a first support member and a second support member, the first and second support members attached to the body and axially spaced from each other for securing the sample carrier between the first and second support members.

47. (new) The apparatus of claim 46, wherein at least one of the first and second support members is axially adjustable along the body for varying the space between the first and second support members.

48. (new) The apparatus of claim 47, wherein the first and second support members include respective first and second surfaces for contacting opposing ends of the sample carrier, and the first and second surfaces are tapered for providing full contact with sample carrier ends of differing dimensions.

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49. (new) The apparatus of claim 44, further including the driving source coupled to the actuating means.

50. (new) The apparatus of claim 49, wherein the driving source includes an external magnet and the actuating means includes an internal magnet for magnetic coupling with the external magnet.

51. (new) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the driving source includes a movable platform supporting the external magnet.

52. (new) The apparatus of claim 44, further including the container, wherein the container includes a first container section having a first dimension defining a first section volume in which the drivable component moves, and a second container section having a second dimension different from the first dimension and defining a second section volume in which the sample carrier supporting means moves, the second section volume being different from the first section volume.

53. (new) The apparatus of claim 44, further including the container, and a closure member sealing the container for substantially preventing loss of contents from the container during movement of the drivable component and the sample carrier supporting means, the closure member being physically separate from the drivable component and the sample carrier supporting means.

54. (new) The apparatus of claim 53, wherein the closure member includes a body covering an opening of the container, and a pick-up magnet attached to the body for magnetically coupling with the drivable component to facilitate handling of the sample carrier supporting means without manually contacting the sample carrier supporting means.

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55. (new) The apparatus of claim 44, further including the sample carrier, wherein the sample carrier is selected from the group consisting of a dosage delivery component and means for supporting a dosage delivery component.
56. (new) A method for agitating a sample carrier, comprising:
using a movable component to support a sample carrier;
placing the movable component and the sample carrier in a container; and
actuating the movable component to move entirely within in the container without extending outside the container, by coupling the movable component with a driving source disposed entirely outside the container in non-contacting relation to the movable component.
57. (new) The method of claim 56, wherein actuating comprises reciprocating the movable component along an axis of the container.
58. (new) The method of claim 56, wherein actuating comprises rotating the movable component about an axis of the container.
59. (new) The method of claim 56, wherein actuating comprises magnetically coupling the movable component with the driving source.
60. (new) The method of claim 56, further including mounting a closure member to an open end of the container to seal the container and maintain the container in a sealed state to substantially prevent loss of contents from the container while the movable component is actuated, wherein the movable component is actuated without contacting and extending through the closure member.
61. (new) The method of claim 56, further including coupling the movable component to a pick-up magnet to facilitate handling of the sample carrier without manually contacting the sample carrier.

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62. (new) The method according to claim 56, further including releasing material carried by the sample carrier into a medium contained in the container during actuation of the movable component.

63. (new) The method according to claim 56, wherein the sample carrier is selected from the group consisting of a dosage delivery component and means for supporting a dosage delivery component.